State of Alaska
Department of Fish and Game
Division of Sport Fish

Nomination Form
Anadromous Waters Catalog & Atlas

Region: Southcentral

USGS Quad(s): Tyonek D-8 D-7

Nomination proposes the following revisions: *(check all that apply)*
☑ *Addition* [ ] *Correction* ☐ *Deletion* ☐ *Supporting Information*

AWC Number of Water Body: *(if known)* 247-41-10200-2053-3205-4120

Name of Water Body: *(if known)* Portage Creek
☑ *Official USGS Name* ☐ **Local or Unofficial Name*

For Official Use Only

Nomination # : 24-003
Revision Year : 2025
Revision(s) to: *Atlas* ☐ *Catalog* ☐ *Both* ☒
Revision Code(s) : B-2, A-1

Adam Penn — *Fisheries Scientist* — 7-24-2024 *Date*
Ron Benkert — *Habitat F&G Coordinator* — 7/25/2024 *Date*
[signature] — *AWC Project Biologist* — 12 July 2024 *Date*
[signature] — *GIS Analyst* — 7/30/2024 *Date*

For fish observations, please provide the upper most point (Lat Long) where any two individuals of observed species & life stage were documented. Please use Decimal Degree's with a minimum of 5 decimal places. Please see Supplemental Information Form if you need more room for species observation data and comments.

Species	Date Observed	Latitude	Longitude	Anadromous	Adult Presence	Spawning	Rearing
Chinook salmon	10-Aug-2022	61.9845120	-152.7201702	☑	☐	☐	☑
				☐	☐	☐	☐
				☐	☐	☐	☐
				☐	☐	☐	☐
				☐	☐	☐	☐

IMPORTANT: Provide all supporting documentation that this water body is important for the spawning, rearing or migration of anadromous fish species, including, number of fish observed; photographs of each species & life stage observed or captured; sampling methods, duration and location(s) sampled; copies of data sheets and/or field notes, etc. Please attache a copy of a map showing location of lower and upper observed extents of each species & life stage, as well as other pertinent information such as specific locations of stream reaches where spawning or rearing individuals were observed or captured, and the location, type and heights of any barriers to fish fish passage, etc.

Comments:

Five juvenile Chinook salmon were captured during backpack electrofisher sampling. Sixteen adult Chinook were observed during aerial surveys, eight paired and actively spawning in redds. Eight more were observed single and appeared spent. Upper extents are shown on the attached map.

~ADD new species Life-Phase CHINOOK salmon SPAWNING and PRESENT to existing AWC Stream #247-41-10200-2053-3205-4120 "Portage Creek".

~EXTEND existing AWC Stream #247-41-10200-2053-3205-4120 "Portage Creek" with CHINOOK salmon REARING and PRESENT.

Observers Signature [signature] 4/18/24 *Date*

Observer Name: *(Please Print)* Bill Morris

Agency or Organization: Owl Ridge Natural Resource Consultants

Address: 4060 B Street
Anchorage, AK 99503

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Signature of Area Biologist *Date*

Name of Area Biolgist (Please Print):

State of Alaska
Department of Fish and Game
Division of Sport Fish

Nomination - Supplemental Information Form
Anadromous Waters Catalog & Atlas

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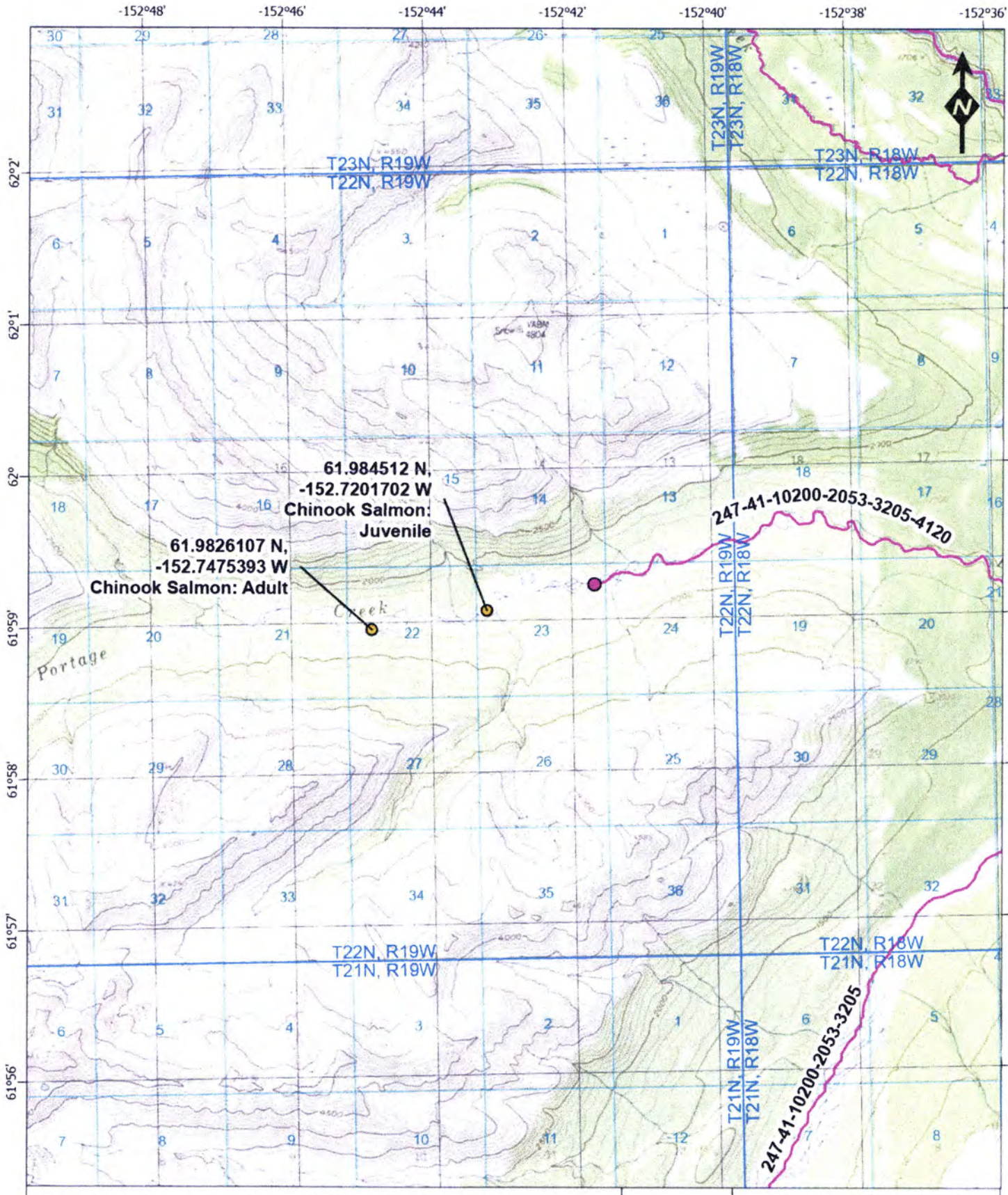
Name of Water Body: *(if known)* Portage Creek

This supplemental information sheet is provided for when there are more observations, locations, and or species and life-stage information than can be documented in the one page Nomination Form.
For location description, please provide latitude and longitude of the upper most point that two individuals of any observed species and life-stage were documented. Please use Decimal Degrees with a minimum of 5 decimal places.

Waypoint ID	Date Observed	Species	Latitude	Longitude	Anadromous	Adult Presence	Spawning	Rearing	Observation Notes *Mortalities, Deformities, Disease, Behavior, Habitat, Etc.*
	8/10/22	Chinook salmon	61.99424187	-152.6529621	☑	☐	☑	☐	Start of Spawning Observations
	8/10/22	Chinook salmon	61.98756121	-152.6939736	☑	☐	☑	☐	End of Spawning Observations - 8 total adults paired on redds
	8/10/22	Chinook salmon	61.9826107	-152.7475393	☑	☑	☐	☐	Upper extent of Chinook observations - 16 total fish, 8 on redds, 8 spent
					☐	☐	☐	☐	
					☐	☐	☐	☐	
					☐	☐	☐	☐	
					☐	☐	☐	☐	
					☐	☐	☐	☐	
					☐	☐	☐	☐	
					☐	☐	☐	☐	

Comments:



10 Aug 2022 Observations

Current AWC Extent

ADF&G Anadromous Stream

Township and Range

Section

MERIDIAN Seward
USGS 1:63,360 Tyonek D-8

AWC NOMINATION
CHINOOK SALMON
PORTAGE CREEK

SCALE:
0 1,000 2,000 Feet
0 250 500 Meters

FIGURE
1

USG0014.mxd 2/15/2024 6:38 AM, R00

MEMORANDUM

To:	Tim Smith
Company:	US Gold Mining Inc. Alaska
From:	Jason McFarland
Company:	Owl Ridge Natural Resource Consultants
Date:	09/23/2022
Subject	Whistler Baseline Fish Data Collection – Draft Report
Attachments:	N/A

WHISTLER BASELINE DATA COLLECTION – PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Introduction

The Whistler Project is located in Southcentral Alaska and spans four townships and several major drainages, including the Skwentna River and Portage Creek (Figure 1). Infrastructure includes the Whiskey Bravo airstrip, several facilities along the airstrip, and dirt access roads within the claim block for exploration. There are existing fish data in the Alaska Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC) for portions of Portage Creek and the Skwentna River, however, there are data gaps for streams surrounding the immediate Whiskey Bravo area and along access road routes to active exploration areas.

Owl Ridge conducted aerial and ground surveys of streams in the project area to determine the presence of fish bearing waterbodies in the vicinity of the Whiskey Bravo airstrip and exploration areas. Aerial salmon surveys of Portage Creek were conducted to document adult Pacific salmon presence. Ground based surveys were conducted to identify juvenile fish species using streams in the project area. All sampling was conducted in early August, when most species of adult Pacific salmon spawn and juvenile fish species are at maximum distribution. All surveys were conducted on August 10, 2022 with an R44 helicopter.

Survey Objectives

This project was developed as a reconnaissance level survey to obtain a broad understanding of the distribution of fish and habitat use. The information from this survey will support development of project specific surveys for use in future project planning and permitting. Specific objectives of this survey include the following:

1) Conduct aerial surveys of streams within the project area to identify potential fish habitat.
2) Conduct ground surveys on selected streams to describe fish presence and use.
3) Conduct aerial surveys to document adult Pacific salmon presence, distribution, and spawning activity in Portage Creek.

Results and Discussion

Aerial Stream Surveys

All streams in the vicinity of the Whiskey Bravo airstrip and exploration areas were surveyed to determine the presence of fish bearing waterbodies (Table 1). Of the seven streams surveyed, five were determined to be either non-fish bearing or unlikely to support fish based on poor channel connectivity to fish bearing rivers, fish passage barriers, or lack of flow (Table 1). The two potentially fish bearing streams were further surveyed on the ground and are discussed in the section below.

Ground Stream Surveys

This reconnaissance level survey identified two streams to sample and quantify fish presence using electrofishing. Electrofishing consists of applying a low electric current using a LR-24 Smith-Root backpack electrofisher to a localized section of stream with potential for fish presence. Sample sites are located in well-defined channels with visible flows and direct connectivity to known fish bearing streams. All captured fish were identified, measured to the nearest millimeter, and released at the site of capture.

A total of three sampling sites located on two streams were selected for the electrofishing surveys (Figure 1) and locations provided on Table 1 and Table 2. Stream 1 is a tributary to Portage Creek and was sampled at two sites (PC-7.5; Figure 1, Figure 2). Stream 2, is a tributary to the Skwentna River and was sampled at one site (SR-2.4; Figure 1, Figure 3).

In the Portage Creek tributary, four juvenile Dolly Varden were captured at PC-7.5 (Table 2a; Figure 4a). An additional eight Dolly Varden and five juvenile Chinook salmon were captured at the confluence with Portage Creek (Table 2a; Figure 4b). Fork lengths of Dolly Varden ranged from 31 to 110 millimeters (mm) and lengths of juvenile Chinook salmon ranged from 34 to 52 mm (Table 2b).

In the Skwentna River tributary, two slimy sculpin were captured and a single Dolly Varden was observed at SR-2.4 (Table 2a and b). Fish were captured immediately upstream of the confluence with the Skwentna River. A passage barrier located approximately three meters upstream of the confluence precluded fish movement further upstream. The barrier was made of tree limbs and detritus that dammed the creek up to a meter in height. Further upstream, more similarly constructed barriers, coupled with low flow and high stream gradient, further inhibited fish passage.

Water chemistry and basic stream morphological measurements were collected in conjunction with fish sampling (Table 3). Water temperatures varied between the two streams, but other water chemistry parameters were relatively similar across sites (Table 3).

Aerial Salmon Surveys

The length of Portage Creek, from the confluence with the Skwentna River to the headwaters, including the North Fork, was surveyed for adult Pacific salmon presence, distribution, and spawning. Helicopter surveys were conducted with two observers flying at low altitude over the stream course. A total of 16 Chinook salmon and one sockeye salmon were counted. Most salmon were located in the middle sections of Portage Creek where the stream gradient was lower than other areas and sinuosity was high (Figure 1). A total of eight Chinook salmon were paired and actively spawning in redds. Another eight were single and appeared spent, as is expected during the time of year in which the surveys were conducted. The

single sockeye salmon observed was not near an apparent redd so had likely already spawned. No salmon were observed in the North Fork or lower reaches of Portage Creek, likely due to high overall stream gradients, water velocities, and large boulder sections.

Conclusion

This reconnaissance level survey identified all perennial streams and waterways within the Whiskey Bravo airstrip and active exploration area. Two streams were identified as fish bearing with anadromous species present. These two streams should be considered for further studies and included in project development plans. All other streams, excluding Portage Creek and the Skwentna River, have a low likelihood of supporting fish due to high stream gradients, fish passage barriers, and discontinuous flows, yet should also be monitored during future studies for changing conditions.

Reconnaissance level adult salmon surveys were also conducted along the length of Portage Creek and identified low numbers of adult Chinook salmon and sockeye salmon. Future salmon surveys should be conducted multiple times during the summer and fall seasons to coincide with different Pacific salmon run timing to describe species presence and distribution in the drainage.

Tables

Table 1. Streams aerially surveyed for fish and fish habitat during August 2022, US GoldMining, Inc. Alaska.

Stream Aerially Surveyed	Latitude	Longitude	Fish Bearing	Notes
Portage Creek Tributary, Site PC-7.5[1]	61.983891	-152.719462	Yes	Well defined channel and flow.
Portage Creek Tributary	61.986850	-152.693367	Unlikely	Small, partially visible channel obscured from view by thick brush.
Portage Creek Tributary	61.988721	-152.653259	Unlikely	No defined channel observed, likely flows seasonally.
Portage Creek Tributary	61.990247	-152.621786	Unlikely	Visible stream channel, low flow, and high gradient.
Portage Creek Tributary	61.979721	-152.581162	No	Visible stream channel and flow. Passage barrier observed.
Portage Creek Tributary	61.973780	-152.580035	Unlikely	No defined channel observed, likely flows seasonally.
Skwentna River Tributary, Site SK-2.4[1]	61.950619	-152.621832	Yes	Well defined channel and flow.

[1] Stream also sampled on the ground for fish.

Table 2. Fish captured from electrofishing surveys in August 2022, US GoldMining, Inc. Alaska.

a) Number of fish captured.

			Fish Species Captured		
Stream Sampled	**Latitude**	**Longitude**	**Chinook Salmon**	**Dolly Varden**	**Slimy Sculpin**
Portage Creek Tributary, Site PC-7.5	61.9838919	-152.7194622		4	
Tributary confluence with Portage Creek	61.9845120	-152.7201702	5	8	
Skwentna River Tributary, Site SR-2.4	61.9501674	-152.6222948		1*	2
	Total Captured		**5**	**13**	**2**

*Fish visually observed.

b) Length of fish captured.

			Length of Species Captured (mm)		
Stream Sampled	**Latitude**	**Longitude**	**Chinook Salmon**	**Dolly Varden**	**Slimy Sculpin**
Portage Creek Tributary, Site PC-7.5	61.9838919	-152.7194622		78	
				31	
				52	
				110	
Tributary confluence with Portage Creek	61.9845120	-152.7201702	35	78	
			52	60	
			34	80	
			35	72	
			42	76	
				105	
				109	
				72	
Skwentna River Tributary, Site SR-2.4	61.9501674	-152.6222948			80
					76

Table 3. Water chemistry of streams surveyed in August 2022, US GoldMining, Inc. Alaska.

Stream Sampled	Latitude	Longitude	Date Sampled	Water Temp (°C)	Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l)	Dissolved Oxygen (%)	Conductivity (µS/cm)	Specific Conductivity (µS/cm)	pH	Wetted Width (ft)	Stream Depth (ft)
Portage Creek Tributary, Site PC-7.5	61.9838919	-152.7194622	10-Aug-22	4.1	12.78	97.5	140.8	234.4	8.25	10.8	1.0
Skwentna River Tributary, Site SR-2.4	61.9501674	-152.6222948	10-Aug-22	8.0	12.26	104.6	143.4	212.3	8.27	3.5	0.5

Figures

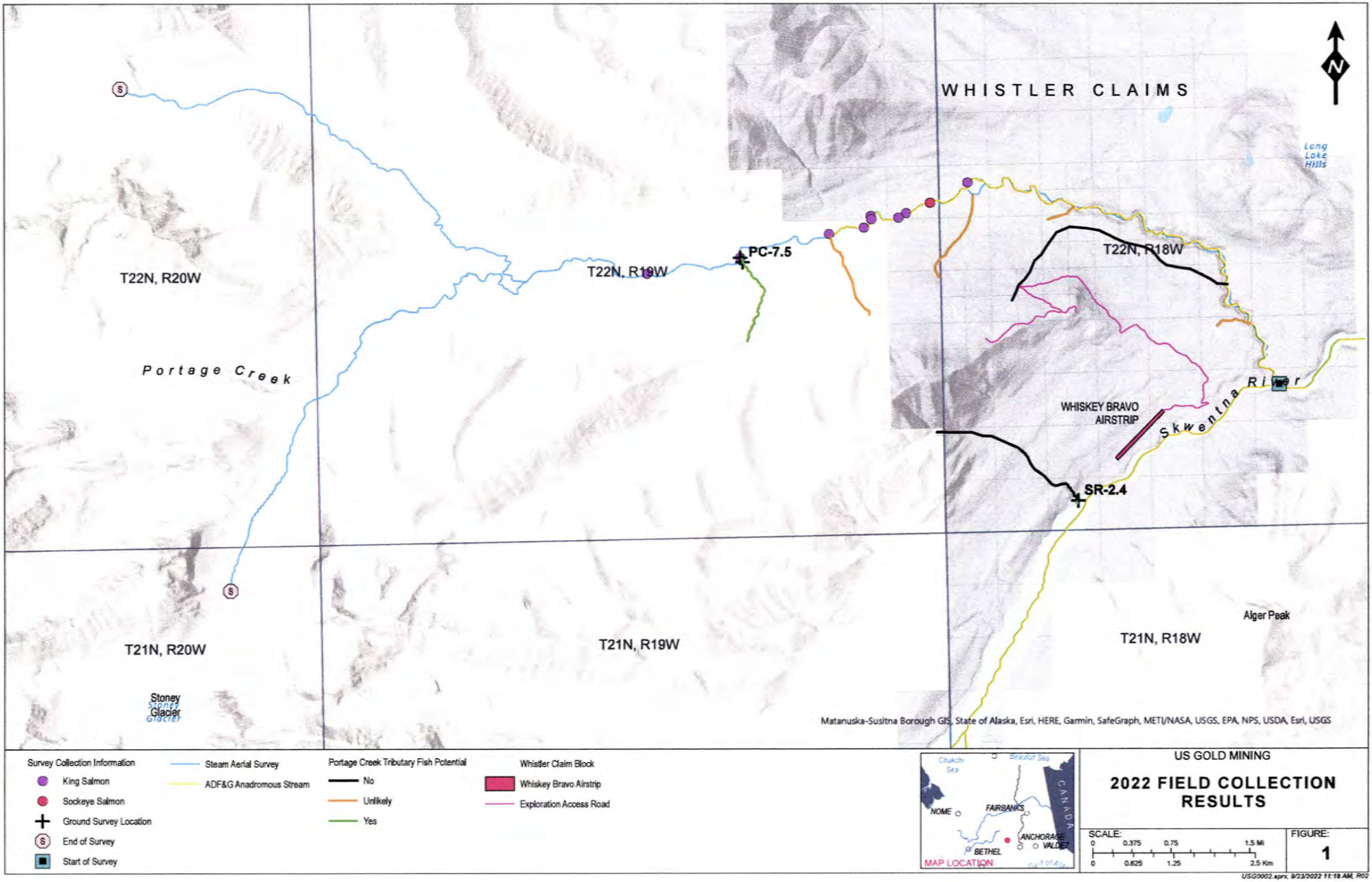

WHISTLER CLAIMS
N
Long Lake Hills
T22N, R20W
T22N, R19W
T22N, R18W
PC-7.5
Portage Creek
WHISKEY BRAVO AIRSTRIP
Skwentna River
SR-2.4
Alger Peak
T21N, R20W
T21N, R19W
T21N, R18W
Stoney Square Glacier
Matanuska-Susitna Borough GIS, State of Alaska, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, Esri, USGS
Survey Collection Information
King Salmon
Sockeye Salmon
Ground Survey Location
End of Survey
Start of Survey
Steam Aerial Survey
ADF&G Anadromous Stream
Portage Creek Tributary Fish Potential
No
Unlikely
Yes
Whistler Claim Block
Whiskey Bravo Airstrip
Exploration Access Road
Chukchi Sea
Beaufort Sea
CANADA
NOME
FAIRBANKS
ANCHORAGE
VALDEZ
BETHEL
MAP LOCATION
US GOLD MINING
2022 FIELD COLLECTION RESULTS
SCALE:
0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Mi
0 0.625 1.25 2.5 Km
FIGURE:
1
USG0002.aprx, 9/23/2022 11:18 AM, R02

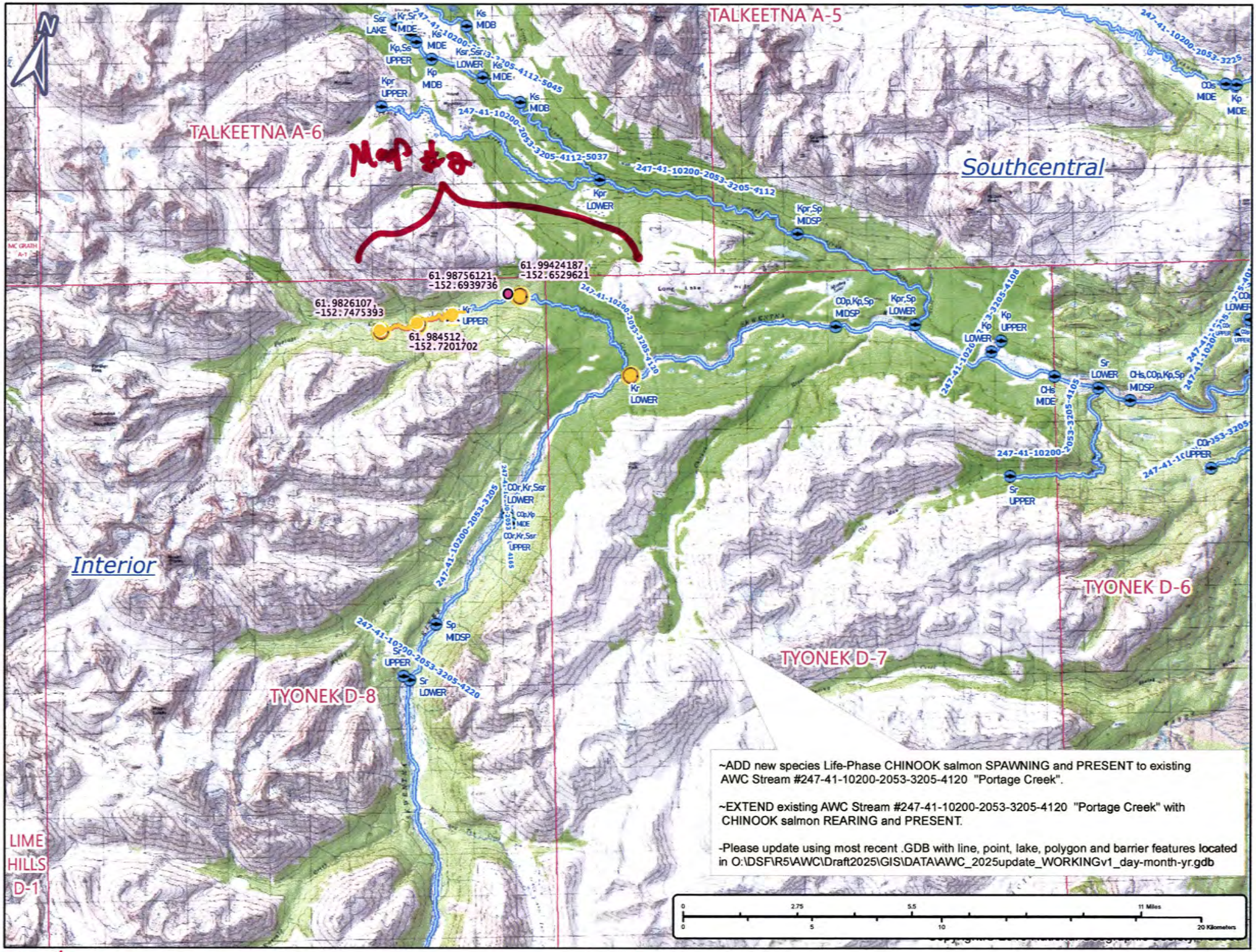
Figure 2. A tributary to Portage Creek, Site PC-7.5, with a well-defined channel and flow and no apparent passage barriers, August 2022, US GoldMining, Inc. Alaska.

Figure 3. Electrofishing the confluence of a tributary, Site PC-7.5, and Portage Creek during August 2022, US GoldMining, Inc. Alaska.

(a)

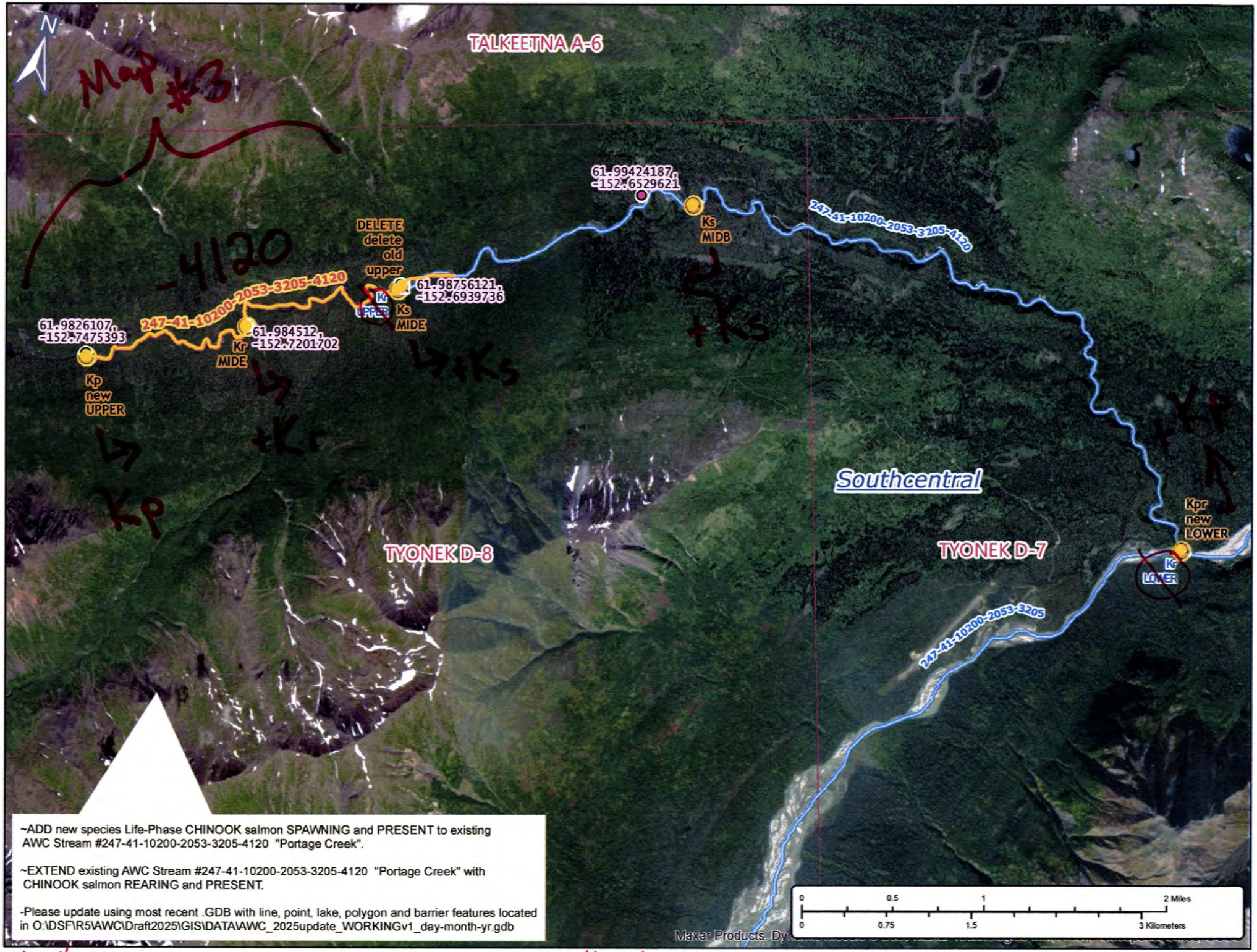
(b)

Figure 4. Juvenile Dolly Varden (a), and juvenile Chinook salmon (b), captured from electrofishing surveys during August 2022, US GoldMining, Inc. Alaska.



Nom #24-003

Map #1



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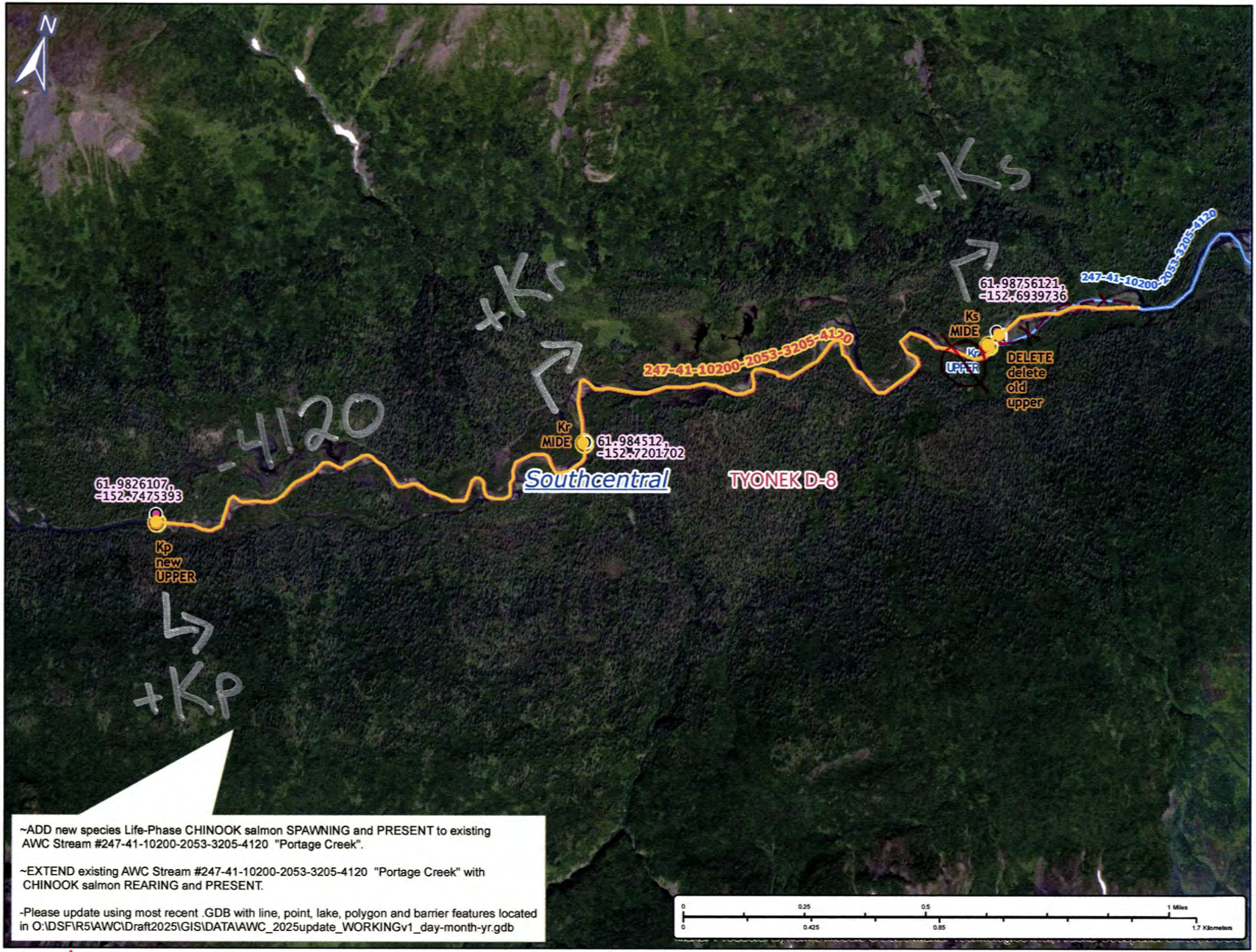
Map #2



Nom #24-003

Map #3